

# COMMUNICATION PLAN

## Initiation



### Communication plan

Good communication is essential to the success of your project. The best way to effectively manage communications with stakeholders is to develop and use a communication plan.

### Initiation

The purpose of this phase is to develop a clear understanding of what your project is, what you want to achieve and how you plan to get there.

## Key points

### 1. Ask the right questions

Start planning by looking at the big picture. Brainstorm with the team. Who are the stakeholders? What messages need to be communicated and why? What action do they need to make as a result of the communication? What style or vehicle of communication is best? How will you know your communication is successful? Who is credible and trusted by the stakeholders to communicate each message? How should it be communicated to stakeholders?

### 2. Choose your approach

Face to face is always the most effective and preferred method of communication, but you should also consider other approaches, such as video conferencing, emails and newsletters. It's often easier to make the most of existing communication channels and relationships, rather than starting from scratch, so find out what is already in place (e.g. regular meetings, newsletters) that you can use.

### 3. Create a toolkit

There are a number of documents that will make the communication process more consistent and organised. These include status reports, communication logs, standardised project newsletters and formal letters. You can use the templates below, or create your own project toolkit.

### 4. Use a calendar

Use a calendar to list your planned communication activities by date and who in the project team has been allocated responsibility. It should be reviewed and updated on a regular basis to ensure your messages are relevant to your current project stage and your stakeholders are up to date. Communicate regularly; don't wait until it's complete or 'perfect' If stakeholders don't receive regular updates, they will forget about your change or think it has stopped.

## Considerations and tips

Every stakeholder group has their own needs, attitudes and behaviours. This often presents challenges, which can be addressed with good communication.

### Positive attitude

Your attitude has a significant impact on how your project is received. Try to be enthusiastic, confident and genuine in every communication. Show you are committed to the project and, above all, listen to stakeholders and communicate honestly.

### Feedback loops

Good communication involves sending and receiving messages. You won't know if your message is effective without feedback. No communication should go out unless there is a way for the receiver to provide feedback or to clarify the message.

### Tailor the message

Keep the communication clear and concise, with no more than five key points each time. Think about who you are communicating with and tailor the message to the perspective and language of each stakeholder group.

### Multiple methods

Don't rely on one communication channel. Email is fast, but largely ineffective due to high volumes being received. Focus groups are not for everyone because some stakeholders don't want to speak in front of others. In this case, consider methods such as anonymous surveys or one on one discussions.

## Choose your approach



## Communication plan



- ✓ **Who** → Stakeholder groups or individuals
- ✓ **What** → What do they need to know?
- ✓ **Why** → What actions do you need from this?
- ✓ **How** → How will you communicate this?
- ✓ **When** → Set regular dates/times

## Further information

[My Health Learning Log in Form](#) – Redesign Initiation (202464923): Communication Management

## Next steps

Once you've developed and using a communication plan, you can be confident that all stakeholders will stay informed and consulted about your project. The next step is to determine how you will evaluate the success of your project.